

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
IO-13 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-08 DOE-11
INT-05 OMB-01 OES-07 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /131 W
-----005963 161208Z /11

P 160928Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1965
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3577

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, PBOR, IS, EG, US
SUBJ: AMOCO INCIDENT

1. ON A RECENT TRIP TO COMSIXTHFLT UNITS, THE EMBASSY'S
NAVAL ATTACHE' HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION THE
COMMANDER OF THE MISSILE BOAT SQUADRON AT SHARM EL SHEIKH
CONCERNING THE VRENT AMOCO INCIDENT ON 7 MAR 78. DURING
THIS CONVERSATION, IT WAS DISCLOSED THAT THIS SAME
OFFICER WAS ON BOARD THE RESHEF MISSILE BOAT AT THE
SCENE OF THE AMOCO INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO THIS
OFFICER, HE WAS DISPATCHED IMMEDIATELY BY THE IDF NAVY
COMMANDER RED SEA COMMAND TO SUPERVISE PERSONALLY THE
OPERATION. NORMALLY COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE MISSILE
BOATS ARE CONSIDERED FULLY CAPABLE IN HANDLING AT-SEA
PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, IN THIS CASE, DUE TO THE HIGH
LEVEL VISIBILITY GIVEN TO THIS PROBLEM, THE SQUADRON
COMMANDER'S PRESENCE WAS REQUIRED. PRIOR TO HIS
DEPARTURE, HE ALSO RECEIVED A PERSONAL
BRIEFING FROM THE COMMANDER RED SEA COMMAND. IN THIS
BRIEFING, HE WAS TOLD TO BE EXTREMELY POLITE, BUT
FORCEFUL, NOT TO INITIATE ANY ACTION AND TO STAY
ON THE ISRAELI SIDE OF THE MEDIAN LINE. IN THE EVENT
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OF DIFFICULTY OR PROBLEMS, HE WAS TO CONTACT THE IDF
NAVY, COMMANDER RED SEA COMMAND, IMMEDIATELY FOR
FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE SECOND BUOY WHICH WAS MISSING,
THE COMMANDER REPLIED, "WE DID NOT CUT IT, MAYBE THE OIL
COMPANY RETRIEVED IT. I PERSONALLY TALKED WITH THE CAPTAIN OF

THE DABUR (IDFN GUN BOAT) AND HIS CREW. EVEN IF THE DABUR ACCIDENTLY HIT THE BUOY CHAIN, THEY WOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT IT BY THE NOISE OR BY A DAMAGED PROPELLER BLADE."

3. THE COMMANDER WENT ON TO STATE THAT HE BELIEVES THE OIL RIG PEOPLE KNOW EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE IN RELATION TO THE MEDIAN LINE, BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE EAGER TO FIND OIL, THEY WILL

CONTINUE TO BE AGGRESSIVE IN ORDER TO TEST ISRAEL'S DETERMINATION TO DEFEND ITS MEDIAN LINE. THE COMMANDER FURTHER STATED THAT ISRAEL WOULD STAND FAST AGAINST U.S. PRESSURE TO THE CONTRARY. THE IMPRESSION HE RECEIVED FROM HIS SENIORS WAS THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MEDIAN DECISION IS A POLITICAL ONE AND ONE WHICH IS RECEIVING HIGH LEVEL GOI INTEREST, HE DOES NOT SEE

A CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S DETERMINATION TO DEFEND ITS MEDIAN LINE.

4. COMMENT: THIS ACCOUNT SQUARES WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM OTHER ISRAELI SOURCES.
VIETS

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